NO. 3—COURTING SERIES.

Chauffeur Charlie Starts Out to Make Myrtle Jealous, and Does It, but He Isn't So Chuckly Over His Success.

By Clarence L. Cullen,
Author of "Tales of Ex-Tanks."

CLARENCE L. CULLEN

"I SUPPOSE maybe they're not there when it comes to saying things and then wriggling out of what they've said at the show-down," observed Chauffeur Charlie to his garage pal.

"Yes, and they're there forty other ways from the ace, chum," was the reply. "Say, you don't learn very fast, do you, son?"

"Well, I'll improve with training, and when I start in my next maiden race you can have a bet down," said Chauffeur Charlie. "I put a near-win over this last time, but these near-wins don't get you anything. Y'see, I started out to make Myrtle jealous. Say, quit that chessy-catting till I get through, won't you? It's nothing to grin about.

"Well, anyhow, when a matey of mine tucked his steady into my wagon and asked me to ride her around the block a few times, why I whizzed her past where Myrt lives at the evening hour when I knew Myrt 'ud be rubbering out of the window, and Myrt was in her window and saw us all right. My matey's steady is a looker, too, and I knew that 'ud help a lot in my scheme of making Myrtle jealous. When I saw Myrtle an hour or so later she was there with the hoity-toity indifferent stuff, but she had to get it out of her system, of course, and when she asked me who the doll was I'd had in my cart, why me to gaze at the ceiling and to stake her to the slow grin, and I told her that some folks were doomed to die a-guessing, and out of the tail of my eye I saw her lamps blaze at that, but she wouldn't let on to me.

"Next afternoon I didn't call Myrt up on the 'phone as usual, and when she called me up an hour or so after my regular time for 'phoning her I told her that I wouldn't be able to hang on to the receiver very long, because, said I, I was going to show Riverside Drive and things to a little girl friend of mine

"Me to gaze at the ceiling."

from Philadelphia that I'd known for a long time; and then I asked Myrtle if she'd called me up for anything in particular. Well, it couldn't have been anything so durned particular, for she'd hung up the receiver before I'd finished asking the question; and, says I to myself, 'I've got Myrt winging on that jealousy thing all right, and I win for nce, anyhow.'

"When I dropped around to see Myrt that evening, though, she sent down word that she was busy manicuring her nails and washing her hair, and that it

"I began to make bug motions."

I happened to drop around that way in a couple of weeks, why, maybe, she'd be at home.

"I was pretty hungry to call her up next afternoon and still hungrier to have a peek at her that evening, but, says I to myself, 'There ain't any use starting anything that you can't go through with,' and so I didn't 'phone that afternoon nor call that evening, and, say, if I wasn't the lonesome son of a 'scouse cook on a sorghum schooner I'll eat your hat and be glad to get it. Lonesome isn't the name for it, but I noticed that Myrt wasn't calling me up enough to burn any insulation off the 'phone wires and that was some consolation, anyhow, for it showed that she was jealous right out to the tips of her ears, and that's what I was trying to put over, wasn't it? Sure! But, somehow or another, I didn't feel so chuckly over that as I might 've.

"Nary a call-up from Myrtle the next afternoon nor evening, either, and then, in a way of speaking, I began to hop around in circles and to make bug motions in the air with my mitts. Felt like getting pickled, but flagged that because it only makes things worse the next day. Good thing I had that anti-pickle hunch too, for 'long 'bout nine o'clock that night Myrtle sung me up on the 'phone.

"'Oh, it's you, is it?' she said when I reached the 'phone, and her voice sounded like icicles rolling down the eaves. 'Then you're not in jail? I heard you'd been arrested for trying to run into a couple of motor-cycle policemen. It's too bad you were'nt,' and then she chopped, just like that, and hung up the receiver. I hopped into the car and was around where she lives in less than three minutes.

"Well, she must ha' been glad to see me or something, for she began to dab at her eyes with a little wad of a handkerchief when I showed up, and yet the sparks were darting out of her eyes at the same time.

"'Say, baby-doll,' says I to her, 'I thought you told me that you wouldn't be jealous of the best man that ever lived?'

"'Neither would I,' said Myrtle, giving a final dab at her eyes and putting away her handkerchief. 'But I haven't met him yet. Who's been telling you that you were the best man that ever lived—or did you dream it? I wouldn't need to be jealous of the best man that ever lived, for he wouldn't give me any occasion to be, but if ever again I catch you riding around with a silly faced, stringy haired, sappy looking softie of a'—— and all like that. You can fill in the rest of what Myrt said, alluding to the steady of my friend that I'd taken out for the little around-the-block spin.

"They can always find a way to wriggle out, can't they—especially when they pull that weep gag on you?"

May Irwin Says an Actress Must Have a Special License to Drink on the Stage and Above All Know When to Stop

By
Charles Darnton.

"She was beautifully soused" "I live in the same building as the president of the W.C.T.U." Getting a stage jag is a very serious matter."

TO place that prohibition party Miss May Irwin on record in her campaign at the Garrick Theatre, I put the question squarely:

"Do you believe that work is the curse of the drinking classes?"

"I certainly do," she declared, coming down solidly on the platform. "I am glad to meet the issue. I am glad to meet you. Let us get together on this question. Many great thinkers, perchance, have turned this matter over in their minds, but I don't believe they have ever turned it loose. The time has come for us to deal with it fairly, fearlessly and intelligently. Look about you, and what do you see? I repeat, What do you see? I will tell you: Everywhere you see the working habit interfering with the drinking habit. One is antagonistic to the other. The man who works is compelled to neglect his duties at the bar. This is the history of our great commonwealth, and history is repeating itself with great regularity. But now we arrive at another view of the case. In fact, I might say, with characteristic modesty, that we arrive at my own case, or, rather, the case of 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse.' May I be permitted to say what I think about that?"

"You may," I consented.

Mrs. Peckham the Solution.

"Well, then," proceeded Miss Irwin, "it strikes me that 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse' solves the problem to my satisfaction at least. To make myself clear, let me explain that it eliminates the question of work completely. In other words, and in all seriousness, playing 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse' isn't a bit like work—it's just a lot of fun. I enjoy it immensely. Now, 'Mrs. Wilson' was nothing but work. It was like trying to break through a stone wall. I used to feel like apologizing to the audience before I started in every night. I wanted to say: 'My dear friend, I am very sorry to give you this, but it's all that I have on hand.' I kept shortening the play and putting in songs until it sounded like a ragtime opera. Then it finally occurred to me to shorten the play still more and piece out the evening with 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse.' I tried the experiment in Boston, and it worked beautifully. But I made one mistake. I gave George Ade's little play first, and what it did to 'Mrs. Wilson' was more than plenty! To save 'Mrs. Wilson' from utter annihilation I switched 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse' and gave it at the end. And let me say right here that I didn't get the Ade piece from my sister Flo."

She looked at me reproachfully and then went on:

George Ade's First Attempt.

"I bought the play fourteen years ago and merely let Flo have it when she needed a sketch for vaudeville. 'Mrs. Peckham's Carouse' was Ade's first attempt as a playwright. I was in Chicago at the time and heard about it through a girl friend. She told me of a wonderfully clever sketch that had been written by a young man on the Record, and I arranged to have her bring Ade to dinner. He was so modest that I couldn't get him to talk about his little play. All he would say was that it was trash and that I couldn't possibly use it. But I managed to get hold of it and asked him what he would take for it. He wrote me several letters advising me to save my money, but finally I sent him a check for $200, saying that I would keep the sketch and wait for him to set his own price. He wrote me that $200 was more than the piece was worth and begged me to accept his heartfelt sympathy."

"And you've been saving it all this time?"

"Yes; this is the first chance I have had to play it in New York. It has turned out just as I expected it would. When Mrs. Yeamans saw it she came trotting back, dear old soul, bringing me a rose and telling me that I was the funniest intoxicated woman she had ever seen on the stage.

"'How did you ever learn to do it so well?' she asked, patting her hands.

"'By watching you in 'Cordelia's Aspirations,' I told her.

Thanks to Mrs. Yeamans.

"And that's the truth. I shall never forget her in the scene where she found a note signed 'Julia' in her husband's pocket and decided to take carbolic acid. I can see her now putting on her wedding dress and her wreath and settling herself in a chair with the bottle in her hand. But she had got hold of the wrong bottle, and in a few minutes she was beautifully soused."

Miss Irwin seemed to have her doubts about "soused" for publication, but she let it go at that, and continued to recall the intoxicated glories of Mrs. Yeamans.

"The finishing touch," she laughed, "was the loose end of that funny old wreath dangling over her eye. Other actresses have tried the same sort of thing since with a lock of hair or a feather, but none of them has ever approached the incomparable humor of Annie Yeamans in 'Cordelia's Aspirations.' The old dear in her wedding finery didn't know what she was doing to herself—that's what made it so delightfully innocent."

"'Drink, pretty creature, drink!' may be good advice to your pet lamb, but it seems to be a very dangerous suggestion to the pretty creature in the play who resembles the lamb in her

in-no-cence and—dare I say it?—stupidity. Nearly every young person fresh from the convent is supposed to prove her white muslin purity by giggling fatuously or reeling ridiculously when she has tasted just one little glass of champagne. Even Anna Held gets woozy after a sip or two—on the stage. But Miss Billie Burke in 'Love Watches,' does it beautifully—there is merely a dainty suggestion of exhilaration. Both give you the French article, but you can't forget advanced English Prossy's fall from the temperance cart in 'Candida.' Prossy insists that she is a teetotaler, but she hastens to add: 'I'm only a beer teetotaler, not a champagne teetotaler.'

What's the Matter with Beer?

"Why not beer?" asked Miss Irwin. "Surely it is much less harmless than champagne. But it is nevertheless a fact that perfect stage ladies never drink beer. Perhaps they drink champagne because they regard it as the limit of deviltry. It's just the thing, of course, for Billie Burke. She is delicious in her little tipsy scene. She handles it in just the proper way. A scene of that sort is a very delicate matter in the hands of a young actress. An older actress who simulates intoxication has more leeway. She can afford to broaden the humor of the scene, but a young woman has to be very careful. For that matter any actress has to have a special license to drink on the stage, and she must know when to stop—where to draw the line. There is always danger of going a step too far and spoiling everything. You never can tell what the people out in front are going to think about you.

"I have letters from women commending the stand I take against drinking in Mrs. Peckham's Carouse. These letters are written in all seriousness and without the faintest appreciation of Mr. Ade's humor. Other women have invited me to join clubs designed to promote the temperance cause. Now for the other side of the case: One woman sent me a letter saying she couldn't understand how any woman, especially the mother of two boys, could deliberately ridicule so serious a thing as the liquor question. Still another woman had the nerve to ask me whether I had gained my knowledge of the effect of whiskey through experience or observation."

The building shook with Miss Irwin's laughter.

"So you see," she pointed out, "getting a stage jag is a very serious matter. It must be purely accidental. Then no one can blame you. It's awful to be under suspicion. And just between ourselves, I'm a bit self-conscious these days. Why? I live in the same building as the president of the W. C. T. U. And they tell me the bonnet I wear in the play is just like the one—but enough, enough!"

Is the Silk Hat Going?

HOW about the high silk hat in the United States?

"Things must have come to a strange pass in the British Empire," declared a well-known hatter, "if they go to dress affairs wearing derbies. Why, that must be as bad as the Boer War."

"Even King Edward wears a derby on swell occasions, when he once wore the high silk hat," was the reply.

"Incredible!"

"And other members of the royal family wear felt hats and caps."

One of the reasons for the passing of the high silk hat in London is said to be the automobile. What revolutions the automobile has effected! It kills children, chickens and established customs with equal unconcern. High silk hats blow off easily; in fact, they become quite uncomfortable on an auto ride. Besides, when one autos he can't very well change his dress until evening, and so in London many afternoon affairs have become decidedly informal. And the crowning loss is the silk hat.

"In this country," said an American hatter, according to the Philadelphia North American, "the high silk hat steadily decreased until about three years ago. The sales since then have been stationary. The styles in the hat have changed little. But if they are giving it up in London I do not think it likely that Americans will soon adopt the derby to go to the opera or purely dress functions. Undoubtedly the hat for daily use is passing. But it remains the proper hat for dress—the only proper hat."

So London, according to reports, is becoming improper—oh! dreadfully, shockingly improper! The silk hat revival fails! Hat dealers are in despair! Straws and caps are the rage! In this country—what? Will it also pass?

THE WIDOW . . CHATS ON THE "LOVE PANIC." By Helen Rowland

HELEN ROWLAND

"WASN'T the bride-groom funny," gurgled the Widow, as she strolled up Fifth avenue beside the Bachelor after the wedding.

"What can you see funny," demended the Bachelor reproachfully, "in a lamb being led to the slaughter?"

"He did look rather—sheepish," agreed the Widow with a ripple of laughter.

"The poor chap had the 'panic!'" declared the Bachelor feelingly.

"The—what?" The Widow stopped jingling her chatelaine and wrinkled her nose questioningly.

"The feeling you have," explained the Bachelor, "just before doing anything rash, like plunging in the surf, or looping the loop, or signing a contract, or telling a lie, or proposing, or getting married, or"——

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Travers?"

"Oh, well," retorted the Bachelor nonchalantly, "haven't you ever stood half an hour on the beach shivering in your bathing suit and envying the people out in the breakers, but dreading to take the first plunge and half wishing a big wave would come along and drag you in? That's the way a chap feels when he's on the brink of matrimony and"——

"And a girl has got to come along like a wave and drag him in," exclaimed the Widow disgustedly, "or he'd never take the plunge at all!"

"How did you know that?" inquired the Bachelor in mock astonishment.

I? I—oh, well, every man gets the 'love panic' at least once when he wakes up with sudden horror to discover that some girl is beginning to mean more to him than a mere pastime. It usually happens in the early stages when he finds himself saying things that are foolish and losing his appetite and neglecting his business and reading the Rubaiyat and buying fancy neckties and turning on the gas when he meant to turn on the water and"——

"I know!" broke in the Bachelor quickly. "I've had it!"

"Had—what?" The Widow nearly dropped her chatelaine.

"The waking-up feeling," explained the Bachelor. "It's like suddenly finding yourself on the edge of a precipice with an insane desire to jump over; you feel chilly and hot and miserable and happy and scared all at once, and"——

"And then you shut your eyes and run!" jeered the Widow with a snap of her chatelaine.

"When you talk like that," declared the Bachelor, reproachfully, "your dimple doesn't show at all. And besides," he added, "a chap can't help it. He doesn't fall in love like a woman, with malice aforethought, and his mind at the altar and his wedding clothes all picked out. Love always comes to him as a surprise. He is stunned and startled, like a person who has been hit in the dark, and his only thought is how to get away—but he always comes back again!"

"The point," explained the Bachelor, "is love, and I've seen it coming"——

"Then run!" exclaimed the Widow.

"But you said"——

"Run after it!" mocked the Widow, waving her chatelaine tantalizingly as she started toward the shop door.

"I can't," sighed the Bachelor pitiously.

"What!"

"I've—I've got the 'panic!'" and he turned hastily down the avenue.

A Revelation of New York Society -:- THE YOUNGER SET -:- By Robert W. Chambers,

Author of "The Firing Line" and "A Fighting Chance."

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALMENTS.

Capt. Philip Selwyn, of an old New York family, has resigned from the army because his wife, Alixe, divorced him to marry Jack Ruthven, a cotillion leader. Returning to New York, Selwyn frequently meets the Ruthvens. Alixe still secretly loves him. Ruthven is luring young Gerald Erroll to gamble at his house. Selwyn begs Alixe to prevent this for the sake of Gerald's sister, Eileen. Eileen is the ward of Selwyn's brother-in-law, Austin Gerard. Nina Gerard, Selwyn's sister, tells her brother that Eileen is falling in love with him. One evening Alixe calls at Selwyn's rooms and a stormy scene ensues. Her husband hears of this visit and threatens Alixe into allowing Gerald to gamble again at the Ruthven house. Selwyn's business partner, Neergard, plans a real estate deal so questionable that Selwyn resigns from the firm. Neergard uses Gerald in an effort to force himself into society. Gerald's dissipation becomes notorious. Selwyn warns Ruthven not to let Gerald gamble in his home. Ruthven retaliates by mentioning Alixe's visit to Selwyn's rooms.

CHAPTER VII.

(Continued.)

Errands and Letters.

FOR an instant, now, as he stared at him, there was murder in his eye. Then the utter hopeless helplessness of his position overwhelmed him, as Ruthven, with danger written all over him, stood up, his soft, smooth thumbs hooked in the glittering sash of his kimono.

"Scowl if you like," he said, backing away instinctively, but still nervously impertinent, "and keep your distance. If you've anything further to say to me, write it." Then, growing bolder as Selwyn made no offensive move, 'Write to me," he repeated, with a venomous smirk; "it's safer for you to figure as my correspondent than as my wife's co-respondent— L-let go of me! What the devil are you d-d-doing"——

For Selwyn had him fast—one sinewy hand twisted in his silken collar, holding him squirming at arm's length.

"M-murder!!" stammered Mr. Ruthven.

"No," said Selwyn, "not this time. But be very careful after this."

And he let him go with an involuntary shudder, and wiped his hands on his handkerchief.

Ruthven stood quite still; and after a moment the livid terror died out in his face and a rushing flush spread over it—a strange, dreadful shade, curiously opaque; and he half turned, dizzily, hands outstretched for self-support.

Selwyn coolly watched him as he sank on to the couch and sat hudded together and leaning forward, his soft, ringed fingers covering his impurpled face.

Then Selwyn went away with a shrug of utter loathing; but after he had gone, and Ruthven's servants had discovered him and summoned a physician, their master lay heavily amid his painted draperies and cushions, his congested features set, his eyes partly open and possessing sight, but the whites of them had disappeared and the eyes themselves, save for the pupils, were like two dark slits filled with blood.

There was no doubt about it; the doctors, one and all, knew their business when they had so often cautioned Mr. Ruthven to avoid sudden and excessive emotions.

That night Selwyn wrote briefly to Mrs. Ruthven:

"I saw your husband this afternoon. He is at liberty to inform you of what passed. But in case he does not, there is one detail which you ought to know: your husband believes that you once paid a visit to my apartments. It is unlikely that he will repeat the accusation, and I think there is no occasion for you to worry. However, it is only proper that you should know this—which is my only excuse for writing you a letter that requires no acknowledgment. Very truly yours,

"PHILIP SELWYN."

To this letter she wrote an excited and somewhat incoherent reply; and rereading it in troubled surprise, he began to recognize in it something of the strange, illogical, impulsive attitude which had confronted him in the first weeks of his wedded life.

Here was the same minor undertone of unrest sounding ominously through every line; the same illogical, unhappy attitude which implied so much and said so little, leaving him uneasy and disconcerted, conscious of the vague recklessness and veiled reproach—dragging him back from the present through the dead years to confront once more the old pain, the old bewilderment at the hopeless misunderstanding between them.

He wrote in answer:

"For the first time in my life I am going to write you some unpleasant truths. I cannot comprehend what you have written; I cannot interpret what you evidently imagine I must divine in these pages—yet, as I read, striving to understand, all the old familiar pain returns—the hopeless attempt to realize wherein I failed in what you expected from me.

"But how can I, now, be held responsible for your unhappiness and unrest—for the malicious attitude, as you call it, of the world toward you? Years ago you felt that there existed some occult coalition against you, and that I was either privy to it or indifferent. I was not indifferent, but I did not believe there existed any reason for your suspicions. This was the beginning of my failure to understand you; I was sensible enough that we were unhappy, yet could not see any reason for it—could see no reason for the increasing restlessness and discontent which came over you like successive waves following some brief happy interval when you gayety and beauty and wit fairly dazzled me and everybody who came near you. And then, always hateful and irresistible, followed the days of depression, of incomprehensible impulses, of that strange unreasoning resentment toward me.

"What could I do? I don't for a moment say that there was nothing I might have done. Certainly there must have been something; but I did not know what. And often in my confusion and bewilderment I was quick tempered, impatient to the point of exasperation—so utterly unable was I to understand wherein I was failing to make you contented.

"Of course I could not shirk or avoid field duty or any of the details which so constantly took me away from you. Also I began to understand your impatience of garrison life, of the monotony of the place, of the climate, of the people. But all this, which I could not help, did not account for those dreadful days together when I could see that every minute was widening the breach between us.

"Alixe—your letter has brought it all back, vivid, distressing, exasperating; and this time I know that I could have done nothing to render you unhappy, because the time when I was responsible for such matters is past.

"And this—forgive me if I say it—arouses a doubt in me—the first honest doubt I have had of my own unshared culpability. Perhaps after all a little more was due from you than what you brought to our partnership—a little more patience, a little more appreciation of my own inexperience and of my efforts to make you happy. You were, perhaps, unwittingly exacting—even a little bit selfish. And those sudden, impulsive caprices for a change of environment—an escape from the familiar—were they not rather hard on me who could do nothing—who had no choice in the matter of obedience to my superiors?

"Again and again I asked you to go to some decent climate and wait for me until I could get leave. I stood ready and willing to make any arrangement for you, and you made no decision.

"Then when Barnard's command moved out we had our last distressing interview. And if that night I spoke of your present husband and asked you to be a little wiser and use a little more discretion to avoid malicious comment it was not because I dreamed of distrusting you, it was merely for your own guidance and because you had so often complained of other people's gossip about you.

"To say I was stunned, crushed, when I learned of what had happened in my absence, is to repeat a trite phrase. What it cost me is of no consequence now; what it is now costing you I cannot help.

"Yet your letter, in every line, seems to imply some strange responsibility on my part for what you speak of as the degrading position you now occupy.

"Degradation or not, let us leave that aside; you cannot now avoid being his wife. But as for any hostile attitude of society in your regard, any league or coalition to discredit you, that is not apparent to me. Nor can it occur if your personal attitude toward the world is correct. Discretion and circumspection, a happy, confident confronting of life, these, and a wise recognition of conditions, constitute sufficient safeguard for a woman in your delicately balanced position.

"And now, one thing more. You ask me to meet you at Sherry's for a conference. I don't care to, Alixe. There is nothing to be said except what can be written on letter paper. And I can see neither the necessity nor the wisdom of our writing any more letters."

For a few days no reply came; then he received such a strange, unhappy, and desperate letter, that, astonished, alarmed, and apprehensive, he went straight to his sister, who had run up to town for the day from Silverside, and who had telephoned him to take her somewhere for luncheon.

Nina appeared very gay and happy and youthful in her spring plumage, but she exclaimed impatiently at his tired and careworn pallor; and when a little later they were seated tete-a-tete in the rococo dining-room of a popular French restaurant she began to urge him to return with her, insisting that a week-end at Silverside was what he needed to avert physical disintegration.

"What is there to keep you in town?" she demanded, breaking bits from the stick of crisp bread. "The children have been clamoring for you day and night, and Eileen has been expecting a letter—you promised to write her, Phil!"

"I'm going to write her," he said impatiently; "wait a moment, Nina—don't speak of anything pleasant or—or intimate just now—because—because I've got to bring up another matter—something not very pleasant to me or to you. May I begin?"

"What is it, Phil?" she asked, her quick, curious eyes intent on his troubled face.

"It is about—Alixe."

"What about her?" returned his sister, calmly.

"You knew her in school—years ago. You have always known her"——

"Yes."

"You—did you ever visit her?—stay at the Varians' house?"

"Yes."

"In—in her home in Westchester?"

"Yes."

There was a silence; his eyes shifted to his plate; remained fixed, as he said:

"Then you knew her—father?"

"Yes, Phil," she said quietly, "I knew Mr. Varian."

"Was there anything—anything unusual—about him—in those days?"

"Have you heard that for the first time?" asked his sister.

He looked up. "Yes. What is it, Nina?"

She became busy with her plate for a while; he sat rigid, patient, one hand resting on his claret-glass. And presently she said without meeting his eyes:

"It was even farther back—her grandparents—one of them." She lifted her head slowly—"That is why it so deeply concerned us, Phil, when we heard of your marriage."

"What concerned you?"

"The chance of inheritance—the risk of the taint—of transmitting it. Her father's erratic brilliancy became more than eccentricity before I knew him. I would have told you that had I dreamed that you ever could have thought of marrying Alixe Varian. But how could I know you would meet her out there in the Orient! It was—your cable to us was like a thunderbolt. * * * And when she—she left you so suddenly—Phil, dear—I feared the true reason—the only possible reason that could be responsible for such an insane act."

"What was the truth about her father?" he said doggedly. "He was eccentric; was he ever worse than that?"

"The truth was that he became mentally irresponsible before his death."

"You know this?"

"Alixe told me when we were schoolgirls. And for days she was haunted with the fear of what might one day be her inheritance. That is all I know, Phil."

He nodded and for a while made some pretense of eating, but presently leaned back and looked at his sister out of dazed eyes.

"Do you suppose," he said heavily, "that she was not entirely responsible when—when she went away?"

"I have wondered," said Nina simply. "Austin believes it."

"But—but—how in God's name could that be possible? She was so brilliant—so witty, so charmingly and capriciously normal"——

"Her father was brilliant and popular—when he was young. Austin knew him, Phil. I have often, often wondered whether Alixe realizes what she is about. Her restless impulses, her intervals of curious resentment—so many things which I remember and which, now, I cannot believe were entirely normal. It is a dreadful surmise to make about anybody so youthful, so pretty, so lovable—and yet, it is the kindest way to account for her strange treatment of you"——

(To Be Continued.)